



## Nighttime Public Meeting on Police Issues

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, October 19, 2009

The Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee, which I sit on, had a special meeting last Wednesday night. Usually, this committee meets during the day. This special meeting was being sponsored by the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) and the City Council stemming from the alleged racial profiling arrests Downtown for public intoxication. This is one of two meetings to be held at night to elicit public opinion about our police force. The next one will be spring 2010.

The city manager briefed the audience on the background of what San Jose has been doing to address this issue like police training, working with La Raza Round table and the Consortium for Police Leadership in Equity (CPLE) initiative to study our police force by an academic nature. Also, a new revised citizen complaint process is being worked on by Police Internal Affairs and the IPA. Finally, he described a pilot project with the Taser company for their new product called Axon which is a small camera that police would wear and turn on while arresting individuals.

A card was given out to each speaker that had three questions:

1. What reactions do you have to City efforts to date?
2. What ideas do you have to address policing issues?
3. What do you want to know about police services?

Here are some quotes from speakers at the meeting:

Question 1:

Kathleen:

Proud that we have looked at all sides of the issue, however city leaving out people that support the police and victims rights groups.

Scott:

It is night and day compared to where we were in 2008. It is positive and the vibe Downtown is good.

Thought 2008 was a PR black eye for Downtown. Sean Webby did good reporting. Chief Davis moved on recommendations from the Intoxication Task-force.

Gentleman from Church Ministry:  
Positive viewpoint of police.

Kathy:  
Mentally ill woman spoke and made no sense. (She is a regular speaker at Council meeting who introduces herself as the US President.)

David:  
Appreciates the efforts. Felt that meetings should be held throughout city instead of city hall.

Raj:  
Wanted to applaud city mgr and police with improvements on reducing the arrest rate. We still have a way to go like what is the underlying causes between community and police. Get to true community policing. Would like to see city drop Tasers. Look at other arrests other than drunk in public.

Bob:  
Not a finger pointer. Feels that some are still pointing fingers at police and that they should communicate and be constructive. Proud of police dept.

Question 2:

Kathleen:  
Hire more police officers as they are tired and overworked. Downtown bars need to be more accountable for who they bring to town. Victims rights advocates should be part of every committee. IPA should disclose who they collaborate with since some groups are not viewed as neutral.

Scott:  
Constructive conversation is bringing community policing more into alignment.  
Downtown Assoc stayed in the conversation with the Intoxication task force and did not walk out like other groups.  
Need to keep training up as new people and business come to downtown.

Issa:

Too bad city waited 'till it was a problem. Son's car was searched without a need. Disappointed with Chief on his meeting with him. Would like police to use consent forms when doing cars searches. He himself was searched at Starbucks by police. Consent forms for searches his priority.

David:

Friends in minority groups fear that police is not representative of the population. In SF the police are recruiting at street fair parties. San Jose should do the same and recruit police that are more like the population of the city.

Teresa:

Husband hit by car on The Alameda and helped by police officer home. Good example of community policing. Community policing helps rid negative connotation of police. Highlight positive experiences. Police should have longer terms in the neighborhood. More training on dealing with individuals with mental illness. More access to public records.

Question 3:

Kathy2:

Commend the city of San Jose for addressing this issue head on. Concern with early intervention workplan. How would the city identify the officers and how often. Represents the NAACP.

Kathleen:

What is being done to involve citizens in community policing? Neighborhood watch and crime prevention are great programs. What is happening to bring youth and police together? More peer counseling where youth would shame others youth from doing bad things.

Open Forum:

Christian:

Disappointed with IPA choices on collaboration with groups that are not neutral. Include victims rights advocates.

David:

Human rights commission is made up of 13 community members. Rep from IPA and Police attend the meetings. If you want to make a

complaint then coming to the human rights commission is a good place to do it. Likes Citizens Police Academy and feels city should do more. Also thinks the city should fund human rights commission to do outreach.

Kathy:

Said we were stealing her body parts. Illegal immigrants are stealing our jobs. Council should be charged with embezzlement. The Fairmont Hotel is my hotel and you have not paid me for it yet.

Kathleen:

Thinks there should be more outreach to neighborhoods (all neighborhoods) police do a great job and have caught many of the murderer's who killed in San Jose. Vigil for police will be an annual event honoring our police.

Issa:

Supports the police. To support it is to help improve it. Take the time to ask police in other cities about consent forms for searches.

Francisco:

(With New Harvest Christian Fellowship) Did not hear about solutions that attack the problem at hand to become more productive citizens. Churches offer programs like a 12 step program with drug and alcohol abuse. We have a family outreach and intervention program that collaborates with 45 business to have a community event. Invited the police however did not attend/support (unclear).

Bobby:

Include the police officers, the Police Officers Association. spoke to 200 youth about opportunities. Sat down with Raj and ACLU to talk and listen. The POA is available to help. Willing to attend the Human Rights commission. Straight Talk.

Paul:

Support the committee's work. Best city council that we have had in a long time. Sometimes the police are asked to change but are not part of the change; agree with Bobby. Otherwise police get squeezed in the middle. Overall doing a good job since your trying.

On a separate issue and with much sadness but happiness for him and his family, Jim Helmer, the Director of Transportation, retired from the City of San Jose. I personally enjoyed serving with Jim and his supporting team whose main concern is safety for pedestrians and

drivers. He will be missed. But have no fear as our new director is Hans Larsen who has a great background and is very capable.

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